

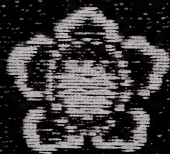
KIM SU BANG

AND OTHER

KOREAN SKETCHES



Ellasue Wagner



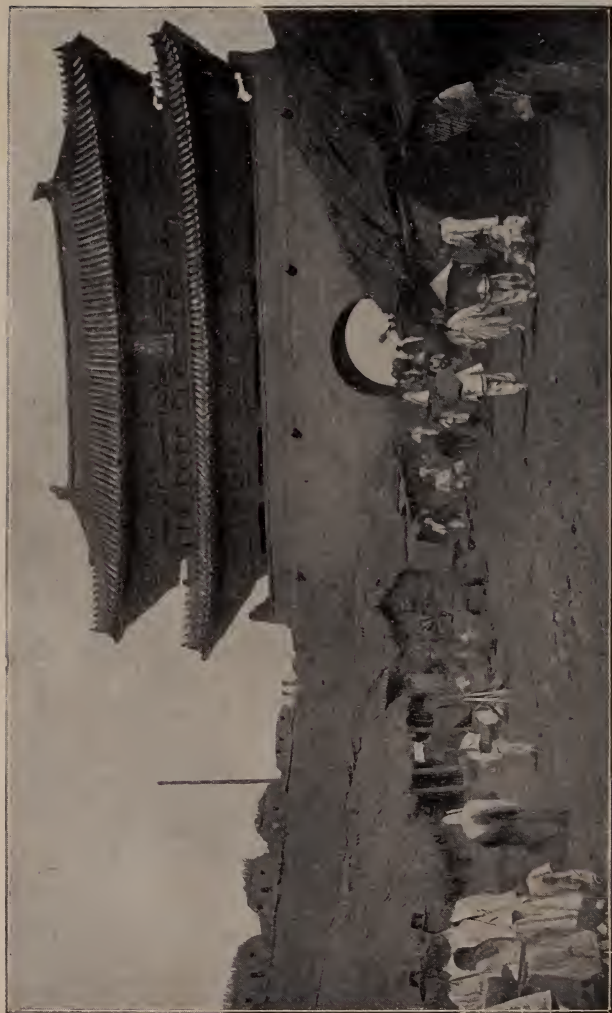
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KIM SU BANG
AND OTHER STORIES OF KOREA



GREAT SOUTH GATE, SONGDO.

KIM SU BANG
AND OTHER STORIES
OF KOREA

By Ellasue Canter Wagner



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Dedication

TO MY
DEAREST FRIENDS AND MOST HELPFUL TEACHERS
MY MOTHER AND MY FATHER
I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE VOLUME

Ellasue Canter Wagner

INTRODUCTION

I HAVE read at a single sitting "Kim Su Bang" and the other charming stories that compose these Korean sketches. The unique feature in each is that it is the Korean as he sees us rather than as we see him. To him we are the "Light Bringers," and he rejoices to see the light and to abide in it. Far beyond any knowledge that he ever had or dreamed of the true God, comes one with the story of Jesus. It is a story that turns the world upside down, it changes all the old and cruel Korean customs of thinking and conduct, but it makes sweeter homes and more peaceful lives. It comes as the leaven of a holy life that causes these simple people to give up what Jesus does not approve, though it be father or mother, or husband or wife, or home or false gods.

In no land has there ever been a more wonderful and more continuous religious awaken-

ing. This history of Korea could be added to the Acts of the Apostles (the one unfinished book of the Bible, as if it were intended that later ages should add new chapters) and seem part of the sacred story. This book, like the Acts, tells of "the church in the house" and how for the old household gods Jesus becomes Lord of all. It is an illustration of the beautiful parable of the growing corn: "First the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear." Here too will be found the "seed corn" of the future harvests in Korea.

EUGENE R. HENDRIX.

FOREWORD

THIS little book is sent forth with a heart full of love for Korea, and with the desire that those who read it may be stirred to pity for the lot of the heathen women.

If some one grasps a clearer vision of Korea's need, or if one person is brought to more loving, zealous service for the redemption of our Korean sisters through the reading of these simple stories, I shall feel that my work has not been in vain. ELLASUE CANTER WAGNER.

SONGDO, KOREA.

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KIM SU BANG

I.

THE FAILURE.

THE emerald-decked hills stood clear and distinct against the bright sky of the springtime. From the crest of the highest hill one might look far down the valley, beyond the terraces of rice fields, to the little village of To Kang Kol. A person unaccustomed to Korean village life would not recognize in this sight a group of houses, however; for the one-story mud houses, with the straw-thatched roofs, resembled nothing so much as last year's weather-beaten straw stacks, half used to the ground. Viewed from the elevation of the hill, the village looked like a nest of huge brown straw stacks.

The only house of To Kang Kol which boasted a tile roof was that of Kim Su Bang, the wealthiest man of the village.

There was great excitement and hustle at

this house to-day. From every direction came people of the village, anxious to have a "sight-see" of the wonders that were to be performed there. Kim Su Bang's first wife was an invalid, and this day had been set by the great sorceress, or "mudang," as the most opportune time to drive out the demon which she announced had taken possession of poor Mrs. Kim and was the cause of all this sickness.

An old woman with bent body, leaning on a stick, slowly hobbled along toward the place of interest, followed by a younger woman, her daughter-in-law.

"No use to tell me," nodded the old lady; "I don't believe the 'mudang' can do anything for the inside of Kim Su Bang's house [Mrs. Kim]. Haven't I seen the 'wewun' [native doctor] try all these five years? Yes, and he has done all he could—powdered tiger bones, the saliva of a black cow, three live frogs, a boiled hen filled with angleworms." She enumerated them on her fingers. "Yes," she continued, "and you yourself know how we

have caught several snakes ourselves to make broth for her. So if these don't cure her, I haven't much faith in the 'mudang,' for I have seen her fail too;" and the old dame shook her head sadly and sighed.

As the two women neared the house the sound of drums and brass gongs was deafening, and they pushed forward with great interest. There on a straw mat in the center of the courtyard lay the sick woman, grumbling in a cross, fretful voice, pale and emaciated, her face drawn and haggard with suffering. Near by were spread foods of different kinds for the spirits.

The "mudang" was in the midst of the ceremony of exorcism. She was a middle-aged woman of evil countenance, dressed gaudily in flowing silk robes, gesticulating and posturing, then making long speeches to the sick woman. This went on for some time. Food was thrown for the spirit, and the "mudang" began to grow excited and "possessed." She leaped and danced, screaming at the top of her voice, while

the excited, wondering crowd stood by, wide-eyed with interest and terror. After an hour or so of this weird performance she ran to a tree, wailing all the time, and announced that the work was done and the spirit was imprisoned elsewhere.

The people turned with interest to the sick woman lying in the broiling hot sun; she had fainted. The "mudang" pocketed her large fee and departed. Servants lifted the sick woman and carried her into her room, where she soon returned to renewed consciousness and suffering.

II.

THE NEW DOCTRINE.

KIM SU BANG had been to the city during this time, and the day after the “mudang’s” efforts he returned home on his donkey (an aristocratic animal, much used by high-class gentlemen). When he heard of the failure of the sorceress, he smiled sarcastically as he replied: “Those women are so foolish! Of course she failed; they always do. I have been hearing of a new doctrine since I went to the city—the Jesus doctrine. There are many people there who believe, and I have brought some books home to study it for myself; and he carefully unrolled two little red books, the Gospel of Matthew and the Acts.

Kim Su Bang was not a bad man. He was not conscious of any shortcomings in his life. He got drunk occasionally—that was expected. He had two wives—yes, certainly; he had

sufficient means to support more if he cared to. The first wife, who was much older than he, had been chosen for him by his parents, according to Korean custom. That he did not care for her was no fault of his, and he did not ill treat her; he simply let her alone. What she did interested him little or not at all. The second wife he chose for himself—a mild little woman, with sweet face and gentle ways, who had not known it was wrong to become a “little wife.” This woman he had learned to love, and during the months which followed his return from the city he turned to her with the wonderful truths he had found in the little red books. She was an exceptional Korean woman, for she could read well, and, in fact, strove to make an interesting companion for her husband. If the truth were told, it would be found that deep in her heart she knew that if she ceased to interest and attract him she would be supplanted by a younger, a fairer woman. She thus made an effort to keep the love she had gained.

Together they studied the books—Kim Su Bang and his second wife—not knowing that the doctrine of that faith would sever their ties for life. They decided to believe and to do the doctrine; and several months later, when a native preacher passed through their village, he found their hearts fertile ground for sowing the seeds of the kingdom.

After instructing them in the way of life and in the laws of the Church, the preacher said: “Now, Kim Su Bang, there are many things you will have to give up and many sacrifices you must make for Christ; but his peace and love are worth it all; I, too, have been through it.”

“Yes,” answered the new follower, “I already have peace and comfort I never knew before. Only tell me what to do.”

“Well,” continued the teacher, “you have two wives. A Christian can have but one at a time, and while she lives he must be true to her.”

“Yes, I have thought of this, and I am prepared to put away my first wife.”

"O, but that won't do! The rules of our Church require that you put away the second."

At these words the listener's face turned pale. "What? But she is the mother of my children! The first one is cross, sick, and old, and she won't hear to this new doctrine. How can I give up the wife I care for? That is asking too much."

Then all through the night they talked and prayed and argued. "I will go now and talk with Mary—she wants to be baptized 'Mary'—and see what she says. It will be harder for her than for me, for she has no home but this. If she consents, I will too."

As the first streaks of dawn were tinting the east with gold, the sad-hearted man entered his wife's room and told her all the preacher had said. At first she was shocked and silent, and only the twitching of the drawn, white face told of the suffering and struggle within. But when she heard he had left the decision with her, she wrung her hands and moaned aloud in her anguish. "My babies!" she whispered at



KOREAN CHAIR.

last. "What about them? Must I give them up, too?" And she drew the youngest of the little ones to her and crushed him in her arms till he cried.

"No," he answered with a sob in his voice; "you are to keep them with you, and I give you your part of all my possessions. The children are mine, all I have; and I love them too, you know."

Then she realized that she was not the only one making a sacrifice. "Go—go away awhile and leave me to think alone," she cried.

The newly risen sun looked down on the man as he made his way with languid step to the top of the nearest hill. There at the foot of a lone pine tree he fell on his knees and, alone with his God, fought the fight with self and—won.

A week later, all preparations having been made, we find Mary and her two children at the door ready to start on her long journey of two days back to her mother's house.

The sedan chair and servants were waiting at the door, and quietly she bade all good-by.

O, yes, it was hard! The fight had been a bitter one, the sacrifice great; but Christ in her heart had conquered.

Let those who do not care for foreign missions and those who ask sneeringly what kind of Christians converted heathen make, look into their own hearts and see if they have made a sacrifice so great for Christ's sake.

With rhythmic tread the chair bearers passed out of the courtyard, through the village, and along the path by the rice field just as the sun was peeping up from behind the hill.

There on the hilltop Mary saw a lonely figure by the pine tree. How well she knew that form! Yes, it was Kim Su Bang; that lone hilltop had become his favorite place of prayer.

Mary covered her face with her hands, while the sobs shook her slender body. The children seated with her exclaimed over the new and wonderful things they saw, and asked many innocent questions about them which the mother did not answer, which she did not hear; for her thoughts were with the lonely man on the hilltop. Thus she passed out into the new day.

III.

MRS. KIM.

MARY had been gone several weeks. Household life was much the same, only in one man's bosom was there an empty, aching heart; he cared only that sweet, bright Mary had gone forever, and that the prattle and noise of little children were no longer heard there.

Mrs. Kim was still sick and cross. What did she think of Mary's departure? For several days she wondered at it. Kim Su Bang said it was for the sake of his new religion, and that she, Mrs. Kim, was the only wife he was going to have. Of course he was lying. She knew he was lying to her, while he was at the same time, very likely, just trying to find another one better looking. As for the new religion, she had no use for it. It was all foolishness, and she wouldn't listen to it at all. There

were some things about it that puzzled her, however. Why did Kim Su Bang send the two boys away with Mary? Every man must surely want all the boy children possible. If they had been girls, she could have understood that; but this was strange. Then, too, he was certainly more thoughtful of her than ever before and very kind. But pshaw! she knew there was some bug under the chip. Kim Su Bang was trying hard to bring the cross, suspicious old woman to see his motives, and wanted her to accept the religion he knew was the only true way of life, but to all entreaty she turned a deaf ear. No, he could be a fool if he wanted to; as for her, she would be as were her fathers.

She looked out of the door one day and saw him coming across the court, in his hand a book. "O, coming again to talk your foolishness!" she jeered in a high-pitched voice.

"I am coming to tell you more about Christ Jesus. If you only knew more about this doctrine and the peace and joy it brings to your

soul, you would not laugh and taunt, but thankfully receive it," he answered quietly as he seated himself on the straw mat at her side.

"I won't listen!" she screamed as she rammed her fingers into both ears and continued to pour forth a stream of abuse.

Quietly he sat and listened, and when he saw she had worked herself into such a frenzy that it would be useless to stay longer he departed with a silent prayer that she might soon be brought to seek the paths of peace. As he slowly made his way across the courtyard, Mrs. Kim's high, angry words still followed him. Did he think of Mary's sweet face and gentle voice, now far away in her home village?

IV.

UNPROTECTED.

MARY had not been long in her mother's house before all around for many miles knew of it. They knew that she was a Jesus believer now, and that Kim Su Bang had liberally provided for her and her children. But few believed the story she told. They laughed and sneered in her face. "Such nonsense!" they said. "We know he just got tired of you, as men so often do. Just wait and see if he isn't getting a younger, prettier wife."

Poor Mary! Her life was not an easy one, for it was hard to bear this scoffing. These people could not understand her motives, and to all her actions false motives were imputed.

Ye Tab Young was a wealthy man, the influential man of that part of the country. He was older than Mary's father, who had been a poor man, but was now dead. Ye Tab Young

was a wicked wretch who never put a check on his passions. A drunkard and a libertine, he was also an official; and with him to desire a thing meant to use every means in his power to get it. There was none in that country who dared to say "No" to this wicked man.

That Ye Tab Young had many concubines was no reason why he should not have Mary also, for he had heard that she was fair and lovely. He forthwith sent a matchmaker, an old woman, to Mary's house to make the usual arrangements, never once dreaming that she would refuse the honor, for had she not been driven from her husband's house?

What were his anger and rage when the woman returned and told him that Mary quietly and firmly refused to listen to one word, simply saying that she was a Christian and could not listen even to such a proposition!

In his fury he stormed and swore that she should be killed for her impudence to an official, but in his heart he wanted her more than ever. He had never before been forbidden

anything he really desired, and this but made his determination the stronger that, at any cost, have her he would.

Widow-stealing is an awful curse. By this means, when a woman young and attractive is left without protection, the man who wants her gets up a crowd of ruffians and, going to her house, throws a sack over her head and carries her away to a life of shame.

Ye Tab Young was not long about gathering a rough crowd of seven or eight men, and stealthily they made their way toward Mary's house.

That evening, without any thought of the evil that was so near, Mary and her mother sat on the floor by the light of the flickering candle. Mary was explaining the Bible and teaching her mother the blessed truths of her religion. The old lady was listening eagerly while the daughter talked of Jesus's love; the Book had fallen unheeded to the floor, when suddenly on the silent night air were borne the loud voices of men angrily demanding admit-

tance. Before Mary realized what it meant, came the noise of the crashing timbers of the gate. Her mother pushed her hurriedly into the closet and turned to meet the men at the door, who rushed roughly into the room.

"Get out of my way, old woman, and tell us where that girl is," demanded the leader. "We know she is here, and you can save yourself the trouble of lying."

"She is gone," answered the old lady, trembling with terror, for she recognized the man.

"Here, give me that rope to tie the old thing; she won't tell the truth; we will search for ourselves."

Then, much to their surprise, the closet door opened, and out stepped the girl.

Why didn't they throw the sack over her head and carry her off then? Why was it that when they saw the calm purity of her face they fell back a step instead of seizing her as they had intended?

Then her calm, sweet voice sounded through the room: "I know why you are here. You

thought you could carry me away. Look you! I am a Christian; and I am not afraid of you, for you *can't touch me!* The God I serve is God of all. He protects me. I have his promise: 'Lo, I am with you alway.' He is with me now; you can't touch me."

These strong, rough men looked at her in wonder and amazement—a frail little woman, unprotected, to so defy them! They stood there thus a moment; then fear and consternation seized them, and, turning with one accord, they fled from the house and down the road as though a legion of angels were after them.

What was it in that little woman, seemingly alone and unprotected, that drove away those men who would have carried her to a life worse than death? Ask Mary. Her faith and earnestness increased, and from that day those who sneered and laughed at her before came to hear her words and to listen as she read the Book.

Thus it came about that when, several

moons later, Pastor Chang came to see how she was getting along, he found a good-sized group of Christians anxious for a Church to be organized in their village.

Now any day in that place one may see Mary with her white veil over her head, going unmolested from house to house among the poor and sick, always carrying cheer and comfort. All recognize her as a child of God—one whose sweetness and purity of life have led many to Christ.

In all that province there is no one more revered or better loved than Kim Mary.

V.

IN WAR'S PATH.

THE next spring Pastor Chang again neared the village which was once the home of Kim Su Bang and Mary. As he came around the curve of the hill he stopped suddenly, with surprise and dismay written all over his face. What does this mean? On every side he saw the charred remains of a burned village, and he looked in vain for the familiar house of Kim Su Bang.

While he stood thus in questioning attitude he saw a man slowly descending from the nearest hill. Yes, it was Kim Su Bang; and the pastor made his way eagerly toward him, anxious to hear the explanation of all this devastation.

Kim Su Bang led him around the curve of the hill toward what was once the house of one of his servants and which was now all that was left to him. As they passed slowly and sadly

HULLING RICE



down the path, Pastor Chang heard Kim Su Bang's story, which, alas! is not an unusual one in these times of trouble in Korea.

After the Japanese took control of Korea at the close of the Japanese-Russian War, the Korean rebels, or insurgents, were very numerous in this part of the country. It was worth a man's head in those times to take sides with either party; and seeing the hopelessness of his country's independence, Kim Su Bang refrained from taking any active part.

One night during the winter, however, a company of Korean insurgents entered the village, and at the point of guns demanded food and shelter from the people.

The next day, not long after the insurgents had departed, the Japanese army marched into the village. Finding that the people had sheltered and fed the insurgents, the Japanese set fire to the village, took all the rice and provisions, and led out many of the villagers to execution as examples of patriotism.

"So," continued Kim Su Bang, "I saw many

neighbors led forth to be shot. I lost all my earthly possessions, and barely escaped with my life. But I am still able to praise God and thank him for his peace and joy; and while I can't understand all these things, I am trusting my Father in the dark." His face was radiant as he spoke.

As the two men came near the tiny house which had once been the servants', the fretful voice of Mrs. Kim sounded on their ears.

"How is Mrs. Kim? Has she yet accepted Christ?"

"No," sadly replied Kim Su Bang; "and she seems to get worse and more bitter against the Church. She says it is my foolishness that has brought all this misfortune upon us. Now we have just one little servant girl to do all the work, when she once had many servants and slaves. Not much to eat now. Yes, I know it's hard," he sighed; "for she hasn't the consolation I have, and she blames me with it all."

"Kim Su Bang, I sympathize with you from

the depths of my heart; for I, too, have had an experience not unlike yours. I want specially to tell you of the wonderful American doctor in the city, who, I believe, can cure your wife of her sickness if you could get her to go."

"I don't know whether she would go or not, she is so set against Christianity and all its workers."

The subject was very tactfully taken to Mrs. Kim's notice, and she was told that there was a great doctor in Seoul who had cured many who were much worse than even she. She listened doubtfully. At first she fussed and quarreled. "Let me die peacefully here at home," she said; "the sooner the better. I don't want to be cut up and made into medicine for Americans to eat."

But by degrees the stories of how others were cured took root in her mind and bore fruit, and she listened to the proposition that she should go. Finally she reluctantly consented. "But," said she, "I am not so sure but that you just want to get rid of me."

"Now," asked Pastor Chang, "how will you get her there? You can't afford a chair as you once could and chair bearers to take her."

"I will carry her on my back," answered Kim Su Bang. "She is very light, and since I have had to work I have learned to carry a 'jiggy.' Of course one hundred and fifty li [fifty miles] is a long way, and she will be tired; but that is the best I can do, and I believe the great doctor will give her life."

The simple preparations were soon complete for the trip, and the man with his strange burden started toward the great city, thinking not of himself, but of the cure of his wife.

Though his load seemed light at first, before he had gone many miles the burden grew very heavy and many stops were necessary, not only for his sake, but for the sake of the sick woman. Her position was not an easy one on the rough framework of the "jiggy," as it was strapped to her husband's back; the hot rays of the sun were very uncomfortable. These things did not sweeten the disposition of Mrs.



WAYSIDE DEVIL POSTS.

Kim, who was used to thinking only of her own comfort. This made it harder for Kim Su Bang. Sometimes, when worn and weary with the heat and the burden, he grew heart-sick and wondered if, after all, it was worth while, and whether she for whom he was enduring all this would ever come to see the light.

The distance to the city (fifty miles) Kim Su Bang had often walked with ease in two days, but with this unreasonable woman for a traveling companion it was not till the close of the sixth day of their journey that they drew near to the gates of the city.

Drawing a towel from his girdle to mop the dripping perspiration from his face, the tired burden bearer stumped his toe on a rolling stone and gave Mrs. Kim a rough jolt before he could steady himself.

"There now! You will kill me yet before we get there," she shrieked. "Can't you be more careful?" she continued, giving his hair a sharp twist and pull.

He did not answer; he heeded not the pain, for his thoughts were beyond, in the great city.

VI.

AT THE HOSPITAL.

IT had been four weeks since Mrs. Kim had been brought to the hospital. She sat in her room with the quiet, white-capped nurse and listened to what was being said.

Can this woman with the eager eyes and earnest voice be the same that was brought in on her husband's back? Yes, the same, but very changed; for the tender ministrations of physicians and nurses had made her wonder and fear at first; then by degrees, as her pain was eased, she accepted without doubt and with gratitude whatever they offered her, whether medicine or religious instruction.

Soon after her arrival the surgeons had performed a delicate operation, which was quite successful; and after this she improved rapidly. With the disappearance of the old aching, throbbing pain came new interest in life and

renewal of faith in humanity, which had been lost with her childhood. Best of all came faith in Jesus Christ; and with this came an understanding of her husband's motives and actions, which before she had viewed with suspicion. Only four weeks had passed, but with them had passed away her old selfish nature; her heart she freely gave to Christ, and eagerly listened to her teacher's words of instruction. The seed which Kim Su Bang had sown so faithfully and under such difficulties were bearing fruit at last.

Kim Su Bang had been obliged to go back to the country; but this was the tenth day of the sixth moon, on which day he said he would return. The nurse had said that visiting hours would soon begin, and the patient listened eagerly as she heard footsteps in the hall. The nurse softly opened the door and said, "Your husband, Mrs. Kim," and then quietly closed the door and left them alone.

"Kim Su Bang!" she cried, holding out her hands, and for the first time in many years

found herself embarrassed and without words in his presence.

He gently and kindly took her hands in his with words of greeting.

"O Kim Su Bang," she said with tears in her eyes, "I have so much to say. But first I want to tell you that I see how wicked, selfish, and ugly I have been all these years, and I want to ask you to please forgive me. Can you forgive me?" she continued as he remained silent.

"Forgive you?" he answered brokenly. "It is I who should ask your forgiveness. Had I been different from the first, you would not have become so hardened. I was to blame. In my ignorance and blindness I did not care then, but the Lord has been leading us both. From this time forth we will both do better."

"I am a Christian, too, now," she broke in eagerly. "There are so much peace and happiness in my heart, which once was full of hate and fear, suspicion and misery, that it does not seem it can be the same heart."

“Thank the Lord!” he answered earnestly. “I knew it would come. I have something to tell you, too. During these weeks I have spent much time on the hilltop by the pine tree. The Lord has been with me, and he has told me that he has other work for me to do; I am going to preach the gospel.”

She looked at him a moment with something more than interest dawning in her eyes, then said slowly: “Well, I’m glad; for you can then help others to know our Saviour. I am only a poor, ignorant woman. I know I cannot help much, but I want to do my part too; it may not be much, but I’ll do all I can.”

The doctor, coming to the door a little later, opened it and looked in; then, seeing them down on their knees in the middle of the room, he softly closed the door and passed on to the next ward with a thoughtful smile on his face and thanksgiving in his heart.

TOKSUNIE

I AM ten years old, and only a girl—just a Korean girl—and my name is Toksunie. My father, Mr. Pak, is a “yan-ban” (gentleman), and I am terribly afraid of him. The servants say there is really no reason to fear him, and I suppose there isn’t; for once he patted me on the head, pinched my cheek, and asked me which of the children I was. Of course it is only natural that he should not know us all very well; for I am only one of the third wife’s children, and there are ever so many of us altogether.

I believe in Jesus, but none of the rest do. They laugh at me, but say that since I am only a girl it doesn’t make much difference if I do foolish things.

Where did I learn the Jesus doctrine? Why, little Poke told me all about it. I listened for hours under the great tree in her yard while she told me the strangest, most beautiful things

about Jesus. Poke's father is class leader in the little Church in the village. She has taught me some of the sweet songs they sing down at the church; and I love that one about "Jesus loves me" best of all, because I feel so different since I know that some one loves me.

Last year Poke went to school to the foreign ladies down in the big city of Songdo. I never heard of such a thing as a school for girls. Did you? She said that there never had been one in Korea until the Christians and Christian teachers came.

I was so lonely after she left that I cried a great deal. Then one day when I was crying Poke's mother saw me and felt very sorry for me. So she said: "I have been thinking about you; so don't cry, little Toksunie. I wonder if you would not like to go to the school in Songdo with Poke?"

"O, yes!" I said. That was better than I ever dreamed of. Do you know what that would mean to me? Why, I would learn to read my Bible and the sweet hymns in the lit-



CHILD'S WINTER DRESS IN KOREA.

the hymn book and many more wonderful things about the world and the people in all the strange countries across the seas. But I would be so very happy if I only knew a little bit.

Poke's mother, Mrs. Kim,* said that if my father said I might go, the very next time that Mr. Kim went to Songdo to take Poke's rice and clothes they would take me with them. She said that the foreign ladies were very kind, and she was sure they would take me in the school, for father would pay for me.

It was that very night that I was so frightened. Mother and the other women were talking after they thought I was asleep. Mother said: "It certainly is time that Toksunie was

*It will be noticed that the surname Kim is used more than once in these stories. Those who have been to Korea will know that this is because of the fact that this name (Kim) is even more common there than is "Smith" or "Jones" here. In fact, at least half of the children in our school were "Kims." There are very few surnames; Kim, Pak, Ye, Chang, Na, and Sung are the usual ones in use, and others are very rare.

married; she is ten years old now—quite a large girl.”

“Yes, I have said so for a long time,” said another. “She is getting so many queer things into her head, too, that if she isn’t sent to her mother-in-law’s very soon you may have a hard time to get her off.”

I know that I am getting old, but I don’t want to be sent to a mother-in-law’s; I want to learn the lovely things I have heard about Jesus. I lay there and trembled as I thought of the fate which would be mine if I were given to a man like those I hear about sometimes, who, because their wives are not pretty or because they don’t like them, whip them so dreadfully that they run away or else die; then, even if I did not die, I would soon be like all the other women I know, who say that girls ought not to study books, and that learning is only for boys. After a long time I fell asleep; but I had decided that the very next morning I would go to father and ask him if I might go to school, as Mrs. Kim said I could do.

The next morning I stayed around the "sarang" (men's quarters), hoping that father would come. But after several hours Mr. Kim's kind voice said: "I have come to see your father about you, Toksunie. Come in with me." So I went in, and they talked a long time, though I did not say a word and father didn't pay any heed to me at all. I don't remember all that was said, nor his words; but at last father said that he supposed the Jesus doctrine was all well and good enough for children and women; it kept them quiet and cut off mischief. He had been to the city and admired the way they taught the girls, for he had not thought girls able to learn books. He said that perhaps if I went to school he could get a richer husband for me; that it was time I was married, and he had already had some good offers. He also said that he had decided to send me to my mother-in-law next month, but that since Mr. Kim was interested in my going to school he would wait two or even three years if I were put in school.

I did not hear any more, for I was so happy I had to slip away and think.

Finally the day came when we were to start to the city. I thought it would never come. The city was a long way off—sixty miles—but I would not mind walking one hundred miles to get to that wonderful place. My father would have had a donkey to ride, I am sure; for he always rides one when he goes to the city; but Mr. Kim is a poor man, and we had to walk. He had a big bag of rice on his “jiggy” that he carried on his back, and Mrs. Kim carried some new clothes to Poke and helped me to carry mine.

The first two days I got along all right, but the third day my feet blistered cruelly; and when we started out on the fourth and last day I could scarcely walk. That day was so long that I thought it would never end.

At last the city came into view—the largest I had ever seen. So many straw-thatched houses together looked like a forest of mushrooms. Mr. Kim led us through many long,



JIGGY.

narrow, dirty alleys, and finally to the foreign teachers. We went down the hill and into the schoolhouse, which was a long, narrow, straw-thatched mud house. There were two rooms eight by sixteen feet, which seemed much too small for all the children. They filled the rooms, and just did have space to sit on the floor by crowding each other. I wondered where they all slept at night, and Poke said that some went home in the city at night, and that the others slept in these same rooms. Every one seemed happy; and as they were all very good to me, I was very happy too, although my feet hurt dreadfully. There were so many curious things to see that I almost forgot the pain.

Some of the girls were writing Chinese characters—yes, real Chinese, like the boys do. All of them except the very smallest could read and write the Korean beautifully. O, how ashamed I was to be ten years old and know nothing at all!

The large girls came in from the foreign

teacher's room by and by with some queer-looking books under their arms that they were studying; they told me what they were, but I have forgotten. Those big girls must know a lot—even more than Mr. Kim, I suppose.

After they were through studying, one of the foreign ladies came in. She had funny white hair that looked like gold in the sunlight. She said that it was time to sew, and they all went to sewing. They were making many kinds of beautiful flowers and other things with silk. I wanted to do some very much, too; but the sweet-faced lady with the white hair said: "No; we must first go to the house and talk about it."

After a while we went up to the house where the foreign ladies live. This was certainly the strangest house I ever saw. They called it "two stories"—that is, it has two houses, one on top of the other. We never have that kind in Korea. But it was much larger, cleaner, and cooler than ours. I asked Mr. Kim if heaven would be anything like this. He said

it would be much better, with no pain or sorrow or even sickness there.

They told me to sit down on a chair instead of on the floor, as we do; but my feet went to sleep in that peculiar position, and I soon slipped down to the floor. The teachers asked Mrs. Kim many questions, and she told them all about how I had become a believer, and about my home, just as I am telling you. When she finished, both the ladies had tears in their eyes, and they talked to each other a long time in a strange, foreign language that I could not understand, though I tried hard; it sounded like bird talk.

Then one of them said: "We are very sorry, but we cannot take her. We should like to very much, but we have more girls now than we can make comfortable, and have already turned some away. Then we have positive orders from headquarters to take no more until we have a new building; so we cannot do otherwise."

Now, I had never thought of that before.

It did not seem possible that they would send me back home. My heart was very heavy and sad as we went back to the school-rooms; for I knew that to go home meant to go into another heathen home with my mother-in-law, who would persecute me and impose many hardships upon me; and besides this, it meant giving up all the cherished plans that had grown so dear to me.

They let me rest a few days until my feet got well again. During those few days I saw enough to make me know that I was missing all that seemed beautiful and worth while in life.

Now we are on the way back; to-morrow we will be home again. I wonder what father will do. O, I wish I were dead, for life will be so hard now. I wonder if Jesus does love me, after all? But the teacher said that we must trust him in the dark. Yes, he cares; I know he cares. But no one else does, I am sure; for I am only Toksunie, a little Korean girl, and why should they care for me?

MITTOME

OLD man Ye sat on the floor of the narrow veranda outside the one small room of the little mud house which was his home. His feet were doubled under him in the manner peculiar to the Korean gentleman; the baggy trousers which had once been white were the color that only white material can assume after many weeks of service. Mr. Ye's horsehair cap was very much awry, and he puffed the smoke from his long-stemmed pipe somewhat faster than usual. But from the expressionless stolidity of his face one would not imagine that he had just eaten the last bowl of rice in the house, and that he had not had any wine that day. The studied calm of his countenance was as serene as usual.

Mr. Ye was in trouble, however, despite his unruffled exterior. A Korean gentleman parts with his dignity the last thing. He may have

to starve, but he cannot work; and Ye Kung Su was a gentleman. A year ago he was living in comfort, if not in plenty. His worldly possessions he had inherited from his father, just how much he did not know; but now, as he gazed into the blue rings of smoke curling upward from the small bowl of the pipe, he wondered what had become of it all.

"Yet," thought he as his conscience gave an uneasy quake, "I am really not to blame, for what gentleman is supposed to know the sordid details of business?"

If Mr. Ye was taking reverses calmly, there was another, however, who was less philosophical, never having read Confucius. His wife's mind was very much disturbed, neither was her disposition sweetened by the present state of affairs. It had been only through her continuous labors and the sale of all their personal and household property that she had managed to keep the pot boiling during the past year. Now there was nothing left in the house except the large iron rice pot.

Two girls and three boys had died in infancy, and only one child, a daughter ten years old, was left. This child, being a girl, had no other name than "Agie," meaning "baby." So, according to ancient custom, her mother was known only as "baby's mother," Agie Omanie.

Mr. Ye slowly and deliberately shook the ashes from his pipe and opened his tobacco pouch to refill it; but lo! it was empty. This was a calamity and filled his heart with more dread than his wife's mournful announcement that there was no more rice. For an unguarded moment the calm expression of his face changed to one of dismay. Just then Agie Omanie came into the court, bearing a large stone jar of water balanced on her head.

Unceasing toil from early morning until late at night was all she had ever known. It had never entered her mind to question the right of her lord and master to idle his time away while she slaved for him and his family. She was only a woman, and ever since her little boys

had one by one passed away and left her husband without a son, she lived daily in mortal terror of being sent away. Her husband had threatened several times to take another wife, and well she knew he would not support two. Perhaps it was hunger, however, that drove fear from her thoughts to-day, and as she saw him seated so comfortably on the veranda her anger waxed hot.

"Here's your supper," she snapped as she set the water pot down with a bang. "Winter is coming on fast; and if you live on gruel as thin as this all winter, you won't be very fat next spring."

Mr. Ye looked at her in great surprise, for this was an unusual outbreak. Others had felt the sting of her tongue, but never had she spoken in this tone to him. Without answering or showing any sign that he had heard, her husband slowly rose, wriggled his feet into the straw sandals sitting on the steps, and with much dignity passed out of the courtyard into the narrow street. "Certainly she is right,"

soliloquized the gentleman of leisure. "Things are getting to a bad state at my house. No wine to-day, and the rice all gone. What can I do? I can't work, and there's nothing left to sell. O yes! I forgot Agie. She is ten years old and a very nice-looking girl. Hum-m; I wonder how much she would bring. Guess I'll go see."

We will not go into the harrowing details of that sale—the parting of mother and child and little Agie's broken-hearted departure from her house to the great, strange city of Seoul. Two weeks after she is carried in bonds from her father's house we find her a slave in the house of the rich Mr. Na and a maid to Lady Na. It would be impossible to describe the torture and agony endured by the timid, shrinking girl during this time. Her fate, however, might have been worse. Had Agie been pretty, she might have been sold for a dancing girl, as many girls are. These girls are taken too young to know or give assent to their dreadful fate, being secured by purchase

or trickery, and are trained in all the nefarious arts of their degrading and degraded occupation.

Had Agie's eyes been beautiful and straight instead of crossed and crooked, had her skin been smooth where the pox marks were left at the time her little brothers and sisters had been taken away by the smallpox demon, had her short, scraggy hair been thick, long, and glossy, she might have brought a bigger price and have found a worse fate than that of a slave to a wealthy lady. To be sure, Lady Na might have been far kinder; for she was capricious, cross and fretful, and very difficult to please. She did not like the new slave girl. She failed to see underneath the unlovely exterior the sweet, gentle spirit so anxious to find a place for herself in the heart of her cold, selfish mistress. Had the lady seen, she would not have cared. The child's ugliness was the call for many rough, coarse jokes; and she took no thought of the slave girl away in her dark back closet of a room after the hard day's

work was over, though the child's heart was sore and bleeding. Many times she was beaten for trivial faults, but it was not because of bruises on her thin little body that Agie sobbed herself to sleep at night.

One warm afternoon, while Agie sat fanning her mistress, a friend of the family, Lady Paek, called with her retinue of servants. After a while the conversation turned to the Christians in the city and the missionaries. "Have you heard of their queer doctrine—the Jesus doctrine?" asked Lady Paek as she nibbled a rice cake.

"What is that?" queried Lady Na; and she leaned forward, anxious for a dainty tidbit of gossip.

"Huh, I'm sure I don't know," answered Lady Paek; "but they do tell awfully strange stories about those foreign people—Americans they are—and they have come here to contaminate our people. Worse still, many are following them and believe their strange doctrine. One of my women tells me that they actually

catch little children on the streets and put them in dungeons under their houses, where they pluck out their eyes and make medicine of them. There are women among them, too; and do you know, they are as bold as the men. They go on the street without a veil, eat with the men, and even talk and laugh with them," and she settled herself back in virtuous content to select another cake.

"Have you seen them?" asked her hostess with much interest.

"O, no, of course not! Would I associate with such vileness? But here is that servant of mine who knows something about them. Here, you; come here," and she raised her voice to a call, and the woman indicated came forward. "Come tell us more about those serpents, the missionaries. What do they look like?"

The woman, glad of such advancement and of preference above her fellow-servants, was delighted to tell all she knew and more. "They are awfully queer-looking creatures," she began. "They don't dress like we do, nor look

like us. Some folks say that they are not human." Seeing the interest of the ladies in her dramatic tale, she continued impressively: "No one knows what they may be. They have queer green eyes, yellow hair that stands out like cotton, not slick, black, and nice, like yours. They are funny-shaped, too—just like a wasp in the middle—and the men have their hair cut short, without a topknot. They said there would be a meeting in the chapel to-night. Wouldn't you like to go and see for yourself? They are very kind."

Lady Na wanted to go, but Lady Paek thought it would be a disgrace. Finally, however, her curiosity got the better of her dignity, and they went.

The preacher was just in the middle of his discourse. The small chapel was full of interested listeners when a great bustle and hurry at the entrance announced the arrival of two great ladies in their bright-colored closed chairs, carried by four coolies. The slaves and servants of each were running by her chair,

and among these was little Agie. Amid much noise and confusion they entered and were finally seated like the rest on straw mats on the floor. The speaker stopped several times and asked them not to talk out loud, but to listen quietly like the rest. But they had come to see, not to hear.

At one side of the chapel, by a small organ, sat an American lady, the subject of their interest. One of the ladies rose and went over to her, examined her clothes and her figure, and asked many personal and embarrassing questions. The American lady was used to this sort of thing, and took it very quietly, trying to satisfy their curiosity and also to keep them from disturbing the service without offending them. Finally they got so noisy that she told them if they would sit down and be quiet she would talk to them after service. Then they were highly indignant, for they are used to being first and to having people stop anything they may be doing to wait on them. So they passed out of the chapel in high dudgeon. The

missionary followed to explain, but to no use. They were much offended, and refused to listen to explanations. The servants saw the ladies leave and followed—all but little Agie. She had gotten so much interested in the beautiful story the man was telling that she heard nothing else. It seemed as though he looked and talked just to her, and as she gazed into his kindly eyes and heard the message of love and hope, she knew the stories she had heard of these people were false, and that what the man said was true. Surely he knew how wretched and unhappy she was, and how she longed for some one to love her, for his subject was, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life!" The minister was inspired by the eager little listener. She had never heard such words before, and she listened with her heart open to the truth of the message. With eager attention she drank in every word, and the new light in her face told of hope and faith born in her heart that day.

After the service she went forward and declared her intention of becoming a follower of Jesus Christ from that day. The missionaries gave her a little red hymn book and a Gospel of John, and she started home with a happy heart, not knowing what awaited her there. The refrain of one of the sweet hymns still rang in her ears,

"Yes, Jesus loves me;
Yes, Jesus loves me;"

and a sweet, soft voice in her heart that she had never known before echoed the same beautiful truth as she remembered the missionary's words not to deny her Master, though she might have to suffer for it.

When she reached home she found her mistress in a raging fury, and her declaration that she was a Jesus believer now did not help matters.

"You little rat! Well, we will fix you. Easy enough to beat that notion out of your tangled head."

Then a man was called to beat her until she

took back such foolish words. But to all questionings the child answered: "I can't deny my Lord." Pale and trembling, she bore the lash until she fell in a dead faint.

When she regained consciousness she was lying on some straw in an outhouse. An old servant woman who had been kind to her before was bending over her, and it was almost dark. "There, you foolish child! I thought you were dead. Well, you will be soon enough if you keep this up. Mistress says she will kill you if you don't give up your stubbornness; and she will, too."

The frightened child sat up and tried to recollect where she was. "O, yes, I remember now! I still have that sweet, happy feeling inside me that came when 'Jesus loved me,' " and then a sharp pain in her left arm drew her attention to this member, hanging limp and useless by her side, broken.

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The preacher was going to chapel for evening service, and with him walked his faithful

class leader. As they neared the building he saw in a heap by the door a strange, forlorn little figure which he did not at first recognize as the child convert of the morning. Soon, however, he drew from the poor, agitated little creature the whole sad story, and that, not knowing what to do, she ran away and came to ask him. The courageous faith of the child filled him with awe, and he wondered while he rejoiced. Calling to him a Bible woman, he sent Agie to the mission doctor for care and treatment; and soon she was comfortable and happy because she knew that all that was possible would be done for her.

The class leader, Mr. Cho, was dispatched to the house of the rich Mr. Na with money to bargain for the little slave. This was easily done, for she had ceased to have any real market value elsewhere; and since it seemed that she would rather die than give up her faith, they decided it would be best to sell her for a good price to the Christians. This they did, and Agie was free.

The child got well fast. Her home was with the kind class leader, and she was soon happier and brighter than ever before. She went to the mission school and learned quickly to read the new Bible and hymn book Mr. Cho gave her in place of the one she left at Mr. Na's in her hurry the night she ran away.

Each Sunday after that she came to the little chapel, always eager and earnest in her desire to know. She quickly memorized many passages of Scripture, and loved to sing the sweet old hymns from the red hymn book. The pale, gentle girl won the heart of all; she was one of Christ's own little ones, and seemed to give her life into his keeping as soon as she heard of his love for her. But she was not baptized because her time of probation was not passed.

Mr. Cho, Agie's adopted father, noticed one day that something was weighing on the child's mind; and calling her to him, he said: "Come, little one; tell me what makes you so sad and unhappy when the other children are playing around."

Then, seeing his kind and loving interest, she told him what saddened her heart—how she loved her tired, overburdened mother, and how ever before her came the mother's worn, haggard, sorrowful face, telling the story of a life without God or hope in the world. Then, breaking down, she cried, "O, tell me, could I be happy in heaven without my mother? She does not know about Jesus, and O, I must go tell her about this peace and rest in here!" and she placed her hand on her heart while the tears ran down her cheeks. "Then, Mr. Cho, I always pray for my father, too. I was always afraid of him, but I try to love him because it was the wine that made him bad and so cruel to mother and me."

The kind Mr. Cho promised to assist her in the search for her parents; and one bright day in early winter he came home with the happy news that he had been appointed to preach on a certain circuit, and within this circuit, fifty miles to the south, lay the little village of Cam-borree, Agie's home.

The fact that it was very cold and that the snow lay thick upon the ground made no difference to the little heroine of faith. "Yes, yes!" she said; "I must go with you the first trip, for I want to be the one to tell my mother about Jesus's love for her."

So it came about that on a bright, crisp winter morning we find Agie and her adopted father facing the cold to walk the long, weary miles between the city of Seoul and the little village of Camborree. He was a poor man; and since walking is the principal and almost the only mode of traveling known to the middle class of people, Mr. Cho and Agie were thankful and overjoyed to be allowed to go on this mission. They had their feet well bound with cloth over the straw sandals. Extra sandals were thrown over their shoulders, while Mr. Cho carried the large bowl of rice which Mother Cho had prepared for the first day's refreshment; for Agie was not very strong yet, and it would take two days for her to walk this distance.

The evening of the second day finds the travelers nearing the little village among the hills. The child forgets her tired back and blistered feet as she sees only the beloved mountains and well-remembered scenes which she had feared she would never see again. There on the hill is the place where she often picked berries; here on this side of the brook is where she came so often with her mother to wash clothes. This is the well she once dropped the bucket in; just around the turn of the hill is home. O, can it be? Yes, that is the house. *Home!* Home at last, and her eyes are bright with tears! But how changed! It is as she feared. It has been sold and her people gone. Yes, it must be; for, see, it has a new roof. There is a new room added to the old shed, and everything wears an air of respectability which the old place had long ago lost under her father's shiftless ways. With her heart bleeding and sore she sits down by the wayside and bursts into sobs and uncontrollable tears, while the kind-hearted man stands by helpless.



WOMAN CARRYING WATER.

A sweet-faced, gentle woman, bearing a water pot on her head, opens the gate; and at the familiar click Agie lifts her head, expecting to see an utter stranger. Then with a cry of "Omanie! omanie" ("Mother! mother!") she rushes forward. The water pot, unheeded, is broken into a hundred pieces, and mother and child are again united.

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That night, as the reunited family sat on the floor of the now comfortable home, Agie learned from her parents that several months before her father had heard the gospel of Jesus, and he and her mother had joyfully turned to Christ; then came the transformation in their home. Peace and hope now reigned where once were strife and desolation. The father told in an agony of tears how he had sought everywhere for his lost child without finding a trace of her. He showed with much pride his rough, brawny hands, the proof of honest toil; and no one would recognize in him the cold, hard man of a year ago.

What had wrought the change? That power which is the unanswerable argument of Christianity—Christ Jesus in human hearts, transforming the unlovely, miserable human life into the lovely, happy life of a child of God. Not only is this man a completely changed creature; but the home, where joy and love now reign, is but an illustration of how all else is changed with the entrance of Christ.

As the father finished his story he cried: "O Father, help me to serve thee fully for all thy great love and wonderful gifts!" Then the break in the voice and the tears, more eloquent than words, told of deep, earnest feeling.

Before many months had passed the fond parents saw that the child they loved more tenderly than ever was slowly fading away. She grew sweeter, dearer every day, seeming truly to live in the presence of the Lord whom she so lovingly served. Soon she was unable to leave her room, but she had for her constant companion her little red books.

"Father," she said one day, "won't you send

for Mr. Cho? I have never been baptized, and I have no name but 'baby.'* I am going to leave you soon, and want to be baptized with you and mother."

So the pastor at the time of his next appointment came into the humble home to bring the seal of the Church to these faithful followers of Christ. "What name do you want to be called, Agie?" asked the pastor, bending over to catch the faint answer, for she was very weak now and could not speak above a whisper.

"Faith," she answered, which in the musical tongue of the Koreans is "Mittome." A look of joy and triumph came into her face as she answered.

Mittome was no longer nameless, but had the name of God's elect, and soon after passed away with a smile to where "beyond these voices there is peace."

In the plain, unpainted coffin, with the little,

*According to Korean custom, girls and women have no individual names.

wasted body, they placed the Bible and worn red hymn book she loved so much.

While their hearts ached, the parents rejoiced at God's goodness as they listened to the Christians singing:

"Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on his gentle breast."

Safe, safe at last, thank God! The mother realized as she never had before what unutterable danger her child had been subjected to and the blessedness of safety she had found in Christ. With this realization of what Christ and his love had meant to her came the overpowering sense of debt to him. Then, falling prostrate, she lifted her heart and voice to her Lord. "O Father in heaven, thou didst save my child from an awful fate; thou didst save us all through Jesus, and now Mittome is happy in glory. I want to thank thee, dear Lord; but I am only a poor Korean woman. I cannot read or write; but if thou canst use me, I give myself to thee, for that is all I have. It isn't a very nice gift, O Lord, I know; but use

me, poor creature that I am. Use me to help save other girls as mine has been saved."

Such was the bereaved mother's prayer of consecration. And within a few days she started to walk the many miles to the great city where lived the American ladies who had in charge the school for training Bible women. In her heart was much anxiety, for she had heard that there were many applicants, and room for but few. Will there be room for her?

As she neared the great city the twilight deepened. The long, thick shadows lay dark across her path. The purple mountains seemed far away and grew faint and dim.

Soon in the distance, from an elevation overlooking the city, Martha (which was now her name) saw the twinkling lights through the smoke from the evening fires. Now soon she would stand in the presence of those women, who might open for her the doors to knowledge and help her to fulfill her cherished mission to the daughters of Korea. "O, is there

room for me?" she cried; "or will they tell me that they have turned many others away?"

Darker, deeper grew the evening shadows; and the lonely, tired woman lingered still on the brow of the hill, watching with unseeing eyes the lights of the city below, while in her heart burned the question, "Is there room for me?"

COME UNTO ME

GOOD morning, teacher ; have you come in peace? I am so glad that you came to see me. I am all alone to-day, and now that you are here I will not get lonely.

You say that you want me to tell you my story. O yes, I will be glad to tell you all about my life ; but first you must eat something.

This is a very humble fare ; but knowing that you were coming to our village, I made these rice-flour cakes specially for you. This "kimchi" [pickle] is made from new turnips. Won't you have some? No? Well, I know that, as a rule, Americans care little for "kimchi;" it has too much red pepper and garlic in it, I suppose.

Now I will tell you my story. I suppose a part of it is not unlike that of a great many Korean women, for many of them have very sad lives.

My father died when I was only eight years

old; and though many years have passed since then and I am no longer young, I can still rehear the shrill, unearthly, hopeless mourning at his funeral and remember the horror and fear with which I observed the preparations to keep the evil spirits from finding and disturbing him.

It seems that I can hear yet the wails of my mother, morning and evening, as she set the sacrificial bowl of rice before my father's tablet. I did not fully understand the meaning of these offerings before the ancestral tablets. I only dimly felt that in some mysterious way it would make my father happier in the shadow land of spirits. So, partly from sympathy and more from fear, I lifted my voice with my mother's to that hopeless wail of despair every morning and evening.

My mother was very poor those days, and it was difficult for us to get even enough to eat. She often talked of my marriage, and I knew that event was not far off. I was very much interested in my fate, I will confess,

though, according to good Korean custom, I could ask no question; and, to appear properly modest, I had to seem very unconcerned and indifferent.

The boy to whom I was finally betrothed, and of course whom I had never seen, was three years older than I, and was said to be a very nice fellow. The bridal gifts were exchanged to the great satisfaction of my mother and the rest of the family; and while I was more concerned about my future mother-in-law and was wondering what she was like, my childish fancy was well pleased with the bright-colored clothes and specially the silk (which I had never owned before) sent me from my future husband's home.

The wedding day came; and I left my mother and the only home I had ever known, which I have not seen since. The long journey to my husband's house in the city seems like a dream now. The bright plush chair, the chair bearers in their blue uniform, and even I, too, with all that gorgeous red robe, seem a

part of a long-past dream. The family I was entering was well-to-do; and although we were so very poor, my mother had managed to make a very fine match for me because I was considered quite pretty in those days. I had always been a delicate child, and I suppose it was that fragile beauty which was in demand.

During the wedding ceremony, which was at the groom's house, and which consisted simply of the bride and groom bowing to each other, I had to appear as much as if I were made of wood as possible. My mother and the other women at home, who, according to our custom, never attend the marriage of a girl of the family, had given me special injunctions as to my behavior on this great day, and I knew that if I spoke on that day for any reason it would be a disgrace.

Home and all of my kin were left behind. I was in a new world, and must learn to adjust myself to it without outside help; and yet I was only nine years old.

Although I had never seen Ye Tai Ya, the



BRIDE AND GROOM.

groom, it was not good manners for me to look at him then. He never said a word to me, and I didn't dare look at him; but in some way I felt that he was sorry for me. He was not rude, but rather gentle, and I liked him right away. As soon as the ceremony was over he went back to the men's quarters to the feast, and the women took me to the inside part of the house—the women's quarters. There I sat all day, not moving, not speaking, to be gazed upon and criticised. O how lonely and dreary I felt in the midst of that crowd of careless, unsympathetic women! My mother-in-law was determined that I should not be vain; and if any one said I was pretty, she would reply: "Pretty? O, no! Her eyes are not a good shape, and she is too thin." Through all the comments, favorable or unfavorable, I was expected to sit with downcast eyes and seem not to hear. Then they discussed my family—our poverty and position—until it seemed my heart would break, and I thought if I could just run away and go home again I would be happy, for I would rather die than be there.

O the days of unhappiness and misery that followed! My mother-in-law was cruel, heartless, and irritable. She decided that I was spoiled and vain, and that it was her duty to straighten me out. For several weeks the relatives and neighbors came in to see the bride; and I was dressed up to be shown off, much as though I were a new pony or an image.

Ye Tai Ya I seldom saw. He was going to school, and his mother was so very cross that he never liked to come inside our court; and I did not blame him, for I would gladly have stayed away had it been possible. He paid very little attention to me, but went his way much as though I did not exist. However, he was the only one who was not really unkind, and I often felt that he would have been very kind if he had dared.

We had plenty of this world's goods, and kept several servants, and it was not necessary for me to work hard; but my mother-in-law did not want me to be lazy; and while she did nothing at all, I had to take my place in the kitchen

with the hardest work. Often at night in the summer, after a hard day's work, I had to sit and fan her to sleep. If I stopped fanning, she would wake up and scold me; so many nights I sat by her on the floor until dawn.

Thus the years passed by. O, no! they were far from being happy. I had always been delicate, and the hard work and unhappy surroundings were telling on my health. Many times I thought of suicide, but every means seemed so hard. Many women I had heard of had drunk lye, but death by that means is so slow and painful. If I had been able to get some powerful, quick drug, I would have killed myself; for life held no joys and few promises of better things.

Ye Tai Ya had taken to drink. He was home but seldom, and then very often he was drunk. I can look back on those days, however, and truly say that he was never cruel to me. His mother was the great thorn in my flesh, the great burden of my life. Had I been a slave, my life would have been no harder.

Through a neighbor who moved from my home village I learned that my mother was dead and the home sold for debt. I might have run away if I had known where to run, but where could I go? There seemed nothing to do but patiently endure till the end.

Many times the heartless old woman beat me cruelly for mere trifles. It seemed that she was tired of me, and would gladly have had me out of the way. It was on my twentieth birthday that she gave me an unusually hard beating; and for some time after that I was unconscious, and this was followed by native fever, from which it seemed for a long time that I would not recover. I was not conscious, however, much of the time, and remember little save that one of the old servant women cared for me during this time.

After my recovery from this illness my mother-in-law told me without much mercy that she had decided to get a second wife for her son because I was so puny and good-for-nothing. She already had the girl

selected. Of course I could stay. Certainly I was the first wife; but I had a bad temper and was not kind to her, though if I had had a son it would have been different.

Then came the time I never can forget. It seemed that the old tiger was not satisfied with what she had done, but made up her mind to get rid of me altogether. That night she provoked a quarrel over something I had done about the work—done as best I could, but not to suit her fancy. Then she scolded and abused me until midnight. I stood it as long as I could, and then did what she hoped I would do—lost control of my temper, and answered back. Ye Tai Ya came in just then, and I appealed to him; but he was too drunk to understand, and went staggering into his room, chanting a drunken song. His mother then waxed furious. “Never let me see your face again!” she screamed, and in her rage pulled me to the high wall, thrust me out of the big gate into the narrow street, and fastened the ponderous bolts.

There, alone at midnight, unprotected on the streets of that great city, I stood dazed and horrified. The loud voice of my mother-in-law and her abuses came to me across the wall, and I started to run—where? I did not know, but anywhere to be rid of her eternal nagging and persecution.

Did I think then of my husband? O, yes! That was a sore place in my heart, for I had learned to love him as much as was natural. I did not know him very well, yet he had always been kind to me in a way; and he was the only one left in all the world who had been kind except the servants; they were sorry for me.

That night, alone in a great city, I felt that life was truly worth very little. Afraid and terror-stricken, I knew not where to go. Some men passing me laughed and followed. With a great horror coming over me, I turned into a narrow alley. Fear lent wings to my feet, and I sped away like the wind. I heard the men coming, and faster and faster I went

through alleys and streets until they were far away and lost in the distance. But I did not stop until I dropped exhausted by the way. In my despair I thought of only one thing—the river. I did not know where it was, nor in what direction, for I had been out only in a closed chair; but I would find it somehow, and there end my sorrow with my life. At last I found strength to move on, and as I was passing slowly down a side street I saw an old woman sitting in an open door. She saw me too as I was trying to slip past, and called to me. Her voice was kind, and, not knowing what else to do, I stopped. Although I had on no veil, she must have seen from my clothes that I was no slave, and she probably guessed what had happened. Finally she drew from me my story, which is not an unusual one, you know. Then she said: “You are too good-looking to kill yourself. I wouldn’t do any such thing. You stay here with me until morning, and then we will see what can be done.”

I was then so tired and withal so glad to get any shelter from that awful street and its dangers that I stayed.

The next morning I found that the old lady was trying to make some money for herself and not simply kind for the sake of goodness. She was a matchmaker, and would manage so as to get a husband for me and a fee for herself. There was a rich man in a village near the city who had commissioned her to find him a pretty concubine. She liked my face, and thought I would do well.

At first I would not hear to it. Of course I knew that I could never go back to Ye Tai Ya's house, anyway, and he would have another wife. It was true that many of those I knew did this very thing. No, I did not know that it was wrong; but my very soul shrank from it. "I would rather die," I said. But the old lady argued and persuaded for some time.

I stayed there several weeks. I had no other place to go. It was this: be a concubine or—the river. The more I thought of the river

the more awful it seemed. I would die then, and what becomes of one after death? Would my soul go into a cat or dog? Perhaps I would be born a woman again and live the same life over. I did not know.

So I listened to the old woman's arguments, and gradually my resolution wavered. I was so unhappy that it made no difference, I thought, what happened to me.

Then I yielded, though my first venture on the matrimonial sea had not been a pleasant voyage.

Mr. Sung was not a good man in any sense of the word; but for a while he was very kind to me, and I had everything to make me comfortable and a home separate from the other wife. No, I was not happy; I soon grew to hate that wicked old man, and was sad and sorrow-stricken. Perhaps if I had been vivacious and interesting, he would not have grown tired of me before a year had passed; but I was grateful for a comfortable home and because I had no mother-in-law to beat me.

Then my baby came. How I had hoped it would be a boy! Many times I had walked to the top of the mountain and made sacrifices to the spirits there and prayed to them to send me a boy. Mr. Sung had no son, and above all things else he wanted a son to inherit his property and worship him when he was dead. So if my baby had been a boy I would always have had a home at least. But the gods were deaf; it was a girl.

Mr. Sung was in the city when the little girl was born, but he came home when she was three days old. I shall never forget how that man raged. He raved and swore at me, tore his hair, and I believe he would have killed the baby if I had let him get his hands on her. "Go," he cried; "you are nothing but a pretty beggar. Go, and never do I want to see you again!" Then he kicked me out of the door into the street, and it was a cold, chilly day in March.

The poor baby fretted and cried; and I tied her on my back, not feeling the cold, scarcely

thinking at all. And that was the last that I knew or remembered for many days.

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After a long time I opened my eyes and looked around, though I was so weak I could not move. I was in a tidy, comfortable room, lying on a nice, hot floor. It was night, and a candle flickered in a tall brass candlestick by my side; and near by sat a sweet-faced woman. She had a book in her hand, and was reading aloud. I listened in wonder: " 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.' "

What strange, sweet words those were! I felt a dim, unknown sense of peace and security. I moved, and the woman stopped reading and looked up. "Am I dead?" I asked. "I

feel so strange and unnatural; and what are those beautiful words you are reading?"

"No," she said, "you are not dead; but you have been very, very sick. You are with friends, but you must not talk now. No, you must not talk any more; but take this medicine and go to sleep, and when you are stronger I will tell you about what has happened."

So I fell asleep again with a strange sense of rest and security I had not known before.

When I next waked up, I was stronger; and the Christian woman, Louis, told me what had happened. She said that some of the Christians found me wandering about the city streets with a high fever and delirious. The little baby tied on my back was dead. These Christians had taken me to the home of this good woman, and she had nursed me day and night through four weeks of fever and sickness.

Slowly life and strength came back to me through the nursing and care of Louis. She ministered gently unto me, and not only nourished my body, but my starving soul as well.

I begged to hear more of the Book I heard her reading while I was sick, and she gladly gratified me. The sweetest words that ever mortal heard are in that blessed Book.

At first I could not understand why these people took me, a stranger, into their home and cared for me, and I was inclined to be suspicious. But gradually, as I heard more of their religion, of Jesus Christ and his work on earth, of how he even died to save others, I began to understand that it was not through any hope of receiving pay but simply for the sake of this Saviour and his followers, that they had taken me in, a stranger, and sick unto death.

Many hours I would sit while Louis read wonderful things from the Book. Especially I loved to hear the words of Jesus, and one verse I would have her read time and again to me. It was: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." My "rest verse," I call that.

I could not read then; but I was so anxious

to read the Bible for myself that Louis kindly offered to teach me, and so I followed my teacher eagerly when she had time to instruct me. These people were not wealthy, but rather poor. They often had to scrimp to make ends meet; and while I knew that I must be an added care, they always made me feel that I was one of them and no burden. All the housework was done by Louis and her young daughter, so I gladly gave my time and energy to the housework with a much more willing spirit than when under my former mother-in-law as taskmaster.

Whenever I said anything about going away (for I felt that it was not right to stay thus), Louis always said: "No, you are not strong enough yet. Stay as one of the family until the Lord sends something better. Pray for guidance, trust the Lord, and wait until he leads you out."

So I waited and prayed and studied while another year passed away.

The little chapel in the city was the place I

loved best to go. Its peace filled my soul with a holy calm, for it was there that I gave my heart to God. I could trust him afterwards to give what was best.

It was in June of that year that we had a great revival. Many were the confessions made and the experiences told during that meeting. Many were born into the kingdom. You know how the chapel is divided—a high board partition through the middle, the men on one side, the women on the other. Well, one night several had spoken, and it was growing late when on the other side of the partition a man arose. I could not see him, but at the first sound of his voice I grew cold from head to foot. Was I dreaming? No, it was truly the voice of Ye Tai Ya. I listened with amazement. Could it be that he was talking about me? He told how the morning after his mother had driven me away he awakened from a drunken sleep to realize what had happened, but too late to find me. He told how he had searched the city over, but no trace could be found. Then he

realized, when too late, that he loved his wife; and to all his mother's propositions about a second wife he stormed and raged until she grew to fear him. He drank more and more wine, and grew so cross that all thought he was going crazy. Then one night he drifted with some others into the little chapel and grew interested in the Jesus doctrine. Every service found him at the chapel, eager to learn more. He told at length how he had found Christ as his Saviour, but could not be happy until he found his young wife and righted her wrongs.

What did I do? I felt that I could not move, but sat like one in a trance. The congregation was dismissed, but still I sat there with my face in my hands. The others thought I was praying; but Louis, who knew my story, came to me after a while. "Was that your husband?" she asked. And when she found that it was, she knelt down, and we thanked God together while our hearts overflowed with joy and praise.

How I loved him! I had never thought be-

fore that the world could hold so much joy and happiness, and I wondered why my heart didn't burst, it beat so hard and was so full of joy.

Louis's husband was not long in finding Ye Tai Ya and in telling him where I was and all that had happened to me since I was driven from home. I felt that God was indeed leading me out into the way of happiness. He came to me, and yet I did not feel worthy to be his wife, though he said that I was such before God, and that he too had sinned.

This man, so good, so humble—could he be the same I had half loved and half feared?

Of course I was his wife yet in the sight of God, as he said; but I felt that in view of all that had happened we should be married with the Christian ceremony now. So we were, in the little chapel where we had found each other. The old preacher's voice was husky, and tears come to my eyes yet as I recall the beautiful words of that ceremony: "Wilt thou love, honor, and keep her in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, keep thee only

unto her, so long as ye both shall live?" Then, feeling the strong, firm pressure of my husband's hand when the minister said, "Join right hands," I thanked God again that he had been so good to us as to cleanse us from sin and make us pure in heart. I felt that truly we were never married until that hour.

Yes, this is our home. He has gone to the city to see his mother to-day. We don't live with her any more. She is very much opposed to Christianity, and calls us both fools; but her son is very patient, and believes that sometime she too will be saved.

Yes, teacher, we are trying to help save the people in our village. My husband is class leader, but we feel very weak and ignorant.

O, happy now? Yes, indeed. The world is so bright and my heart is so full of joy and gladness that it is just running over to others with a desire to help them to the same great joys.

Do you see the little girl there in the courtyard? She came to me homeless a few weeks

ago, and I am trying to do for her as was done for me.

Why, here comes your chair! Must you go so soon, teacher? It is not late yet.

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The parting salutation of the two women has been said: "In the midst of God's grace may you go in peace." The chair bearers are carefully picking their way across the rice field. But the little woman in the gateway is looking in the other direction, down the valley, where the golden rays of the afternoon sun fall on a man coming toward her. Her face is lighted with joy and happiness, and her lips part in a smile of love and welcome. Slowly she turns her head and looks up the valley as the chair disappears around the hillside. The beautiful brown eyes are filled with tears now, though there is infinite peace in their depths as she tenderly repeats the words: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."



